

Summary of the Report of

The Joint Interim Committee on Immigration

Representative Deleta Williams, Chair

Senator Harold Caskey, Chair

December 1999

The Joint Interim Committee on Immigration traveled to four locations around the state, including St. Louis. Missouri is experiencing an increase in foreign immigration due to increased job opportunities at corporate farms. Local communities are having problems providing services to these new Missourians. The committee heard testimony regarding immigrant education, law enforcement, health care, social service benefits, employment, and housing.

The committee found five ways in which the state could help communities deal with providing services to immigrants. The committee recommends:

- 1) Full funding for English as a Second Language Program (Senate Bill 583 & 645, 1998) and encourages the recruitment of teachers for the program. Corporations are also encouraged to offer English classes to their employees;
- 2) Establishment of a multicultural center and program with the Lieutenant Governor's Office operating as an ombudsman and supporting the center through his or her budget. A citizens' advisory committee should be established for the purpose of designing the multicultural program;
- 3) Simplification of the application process for Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance by the Department of Social Services. Also, all immigrants must undergo testing for tuberculosis. Funding for the test should be provided to state and local health facilities. Businesses employing immigrants should also provide adequate health insurance to their employees;
- 4) Offering law enforcement officers and recruits cultural diversity and Spanish classes and these classes should be given to officers who wish to maintain their Missouri Peace Officers Standards and Training certification; and
- 5) Continuing its assistance to immigrants around the state by Missouri's faith community.

Steve Bauer, Legislative Analyst